

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE: Ukrainian emigre residing in the West (B); from a traveler who returned from the Soviet Union on 29 or 30 October 1962.
Appraisal of Content: 3.

1. Immediately after the outbreak of the Cuban crisis Ukrainian citizens were in deadly fear that war might ensue. Even in the villages in the Ukrainian SSR people knew at once about the crisis. According to a citizen of Kiev, "many people heard the news from foreign broadcasts and were pretty well informed of what was going on". In both the cities and the villages people started to hoard although Party and Government officials discouraged it and there was very little to hoard anyway.
2. Soviet officials continually stressed that the Soviet Government would never start a nuclear war and claimed they had been able to persuade the Western imperialists to listen to reason. Nonetheless the people all read the newspapers anxiously as well as listening to the radio. When Khrushchev's assurances that he would not start a war over Cuba came they were greeted with the greatest joy and the Premier's recently diminished popularity increased markedly.
3. The news about the Cuban crisis was received with particular anxiety by the women and the elderly ones wept openly when discussing the possibility of the outbreak of war. It appeared that the populace was much more frightened of war than Westerners and genuinely desired peace. Quite a chaotic situation also existed in rail transportation with the trains to Moscow, and in general, so overcrowded that obtaining seats was very difficult. At the end of October most of the passengers appeared to be foreigners, mostly Cubans, who were going to Moscow. The military supplies going by rail were much in evidence and in much greater quantity than usual.

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4. Immediately after the crisis began some of the people pitied "the poor Cubans" but later on they were complaining that because of the Cubans the USSR might be "dragged into war". The comments, mostly from the young, ranged from "we have no business in Cuba" to "let those dirty bastards do their war without us".

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